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JEFF HARPER/METRO

Nine schools under review

BOARD MEETING

Five in Halifax going under the spotlight



Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

After hours of debate, nine schools are under review as part of a new process some members of the Halifax Regional School Board said can lead to positive change instead of closures.

The board voted Wednesday to review four schools in the Eastern Passage family, five in the Citadel High family, and defer a decision to review eight in the Cole Harbour District High family until March 2016.

Fifteen parents and residents made public presentations to the board, many concerned about how the planned high school in Eastern Passage would take students from Cole Harbour (leaving it underutilized), affect nearby Auburn High, about there not being enough prior consultation (especially in North Preston) and confusion on what the HRM vision for schools is.

"This vision has to be discussed, agreed upon, and articulated to communities prior

to asking us to review schools," said Shannon Parsons of Cole Harbour.

Advocates of Halifax schools feeding Citadel High spoke about distrust of the board, touching on a process that earlier placed St. Joseph's-Alexander McKay on the chopping block and shuttered St. Patrick's-Alexandra.

"We have a lot of the same issues and problems no matter what the area is," said Shannon Hansen. "How can we have faith in this process that has not worked?"

Superintendent Elwin LeRoux said the process brought in by the province this spring is new, and won't be carried out with parents in a defensive position, but in a workshop style.

+ THE SCHOOLS

- **Eastern Passage family:** Eastern Passage Education Centre, Seaside Elementary, OceanView Elementary, Tallahassee Community School.
- **Citadel High family:** Joseph Howe Elementary, Oxford School, St. Joseph's Alexander McKay Elementary, St. Stephen's Elementary, Highland Park Junior High.



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Unions including the **Nova Scotia Teachers Union** and the **NSGEU** protest outside the Nova Scotia legislature on Wednesday evening. The last time the province tried to impose a wage ceiling on its workers was in 1994. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Public sector protests wage bill

LABOUR

Legislation would impose two-year freeze on income

About 300 placard-waving public sector workers rallied outside the Nova Scotia legislature in downtown Halifax on Wednesday to protest what one union has described as repressive legislation intended to impose a wage settlement on 75,000 unionized workers.

If it becomes law, the Public

Services Sustainability Act would impose a two-year wage freeze on virtually every public servant, followed by a three per cent raise over the next two years.

Bill 148 would also impose restrictions on arbitrated settlements, which the government says is necessary to keep its expenses on target fiscally.

The protesters used a powerful public address system to chant slogans that could be heard blocks away as night fell.

Some demonstrators carried signs saying, "Unite for Our Right to Bargain," "Ho, Ho, Ho, Stephen McNeil has got to go," and "Respect Teachers, Respect



More than **300 workers** took part in the rally. JEFF HARPER

Bargaining."

Shelley Morse, president of the 10,000-member Nova Scotia

Teachers Union, told the crowd the bill is a form of intimidation. "You can't bargain when

you have a hammer over your head," she said. "It's time for us to stand up."

Janet Hazelton, president of the 7,700-member Nova Scotia Nurses' Union agreed.

"This legislation is intended to tell us, 'Be good boys and girls and take it,'" she told the crowd. "Well, we're not going to."

The 31,000-member Nova Scotia Government Employees Union says the bill effectively kills collective bargaining.

"Bill 148 isn't about any type of public mandate," said union vice-president Jason MacLean. "What it is about is bullying and pushing around union members.

This government has no interest with bargaining with anybody in this province."

The government says the bill won't take away collective bargaining rights because public sector unions would be able to negotiate contractual matters other than wages.

Finance Minister Randy Delorey has said tough measures are needed to deal with the province's "vulnerable" finances.

The bill was the subject of four hours of public hearings Tuesday before the legislature's law amendments committee, and more hearings were held Wednesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

STREET SAFETY

Demonstrators send message to province with mock jaywalk tickets

Julia Manoukian
For Metro | Halifax

A small group of protesters handed out mock \$697.50 jaywalking tickets Wednesday in front of the Halifax Central Library to raise awareness for what they say is an unreasonably high fine.

"Normal, reasonable people could be hit with these tickets, and it just demonstrates how disproportionate and damag-

ing they could be," said Tristan Cleveland, protest organizer and member of the Ecology Action Centre.

Since it was passed in early December by the province, active transportation advocates and pedestrians have criticized the roughly \$287 hike for being the highest in the country, and more than the penalty for using a cellphone behind the wheel.

Catherine Droebeck, a member of Walk 'n' Roll Halifax, was seen crossing the street not at

44

Halifax police have issued **44 jaywalking tickets** this year, as of Dec. 8.

a crosswalk near the protest on Tuesday. While some might say this is jaywalking, she said technically it's fair game because she didn't interfere with traffic.

"I think that's a common fallacy that's happening right now. People just think jaywalk means not following the lights," she said.

Like many pedestrians, Droebeck said the increase in fines worry her not just because they're "ridiculous," but also because they take away from the bigger picture.

"We want more people walking, we want less cars, it's going to help everyone's health, and the environment."

Cleveland agreed.

"Everybody wants to achieve the same thing, which is greater pedestrian safety."

He wants the city to look at the most effective, evidence-based ways to achieve those goals, rather than "hitting a few extremely unlucky people with enormous fines."

He is urging the government to work with groups from the health and active transportation sector to identify more constructive means to increase safety.



Tristan Cleveland, left, hands out fake tickets Wednesday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

City employees' overtime growing: Auditor general

BUDGET

Report shows large variances from transit, police, fire



Zane Woodford
Metro | Halifax

The city's auditor general says there's been a "concerning trend in overtime expenditures" in the last few years, but Halifax's top bureaucrat says it's nothing to worry about.

Auditor General Larry Munroe tabled a report in the city's audit and finance committee Wednesday reissuing 10 of 14 recommendations made in a 2010 report that weren't properly followed through on, and making two additional ones.

"I am disappointed," Munroe said after the meeting. "We had hoped that we would make more progress on this."

Among those recommendations, Munroe's office had asked that city management review the processes for budgeting for overtime — something it said "has clearly been flawed."

Between the 2011-12 and 2014-15 fiscal years, overtime increased by 46 per cent, while budgeting for overtime increased by only 22 per cent.

That led to a variance between budgeted and actual



Firefighters douse each other fighting a fire in Cole Harbour. Some councillors have voiced concerns over the health and safety of firefighters working more than double their scheduled hours in a two-week pay period. JEFF HARPER/METRO

overtime of \$14.9 million over the last four years.

"When you're dealing with overtime, it's almost impossible to get it precisely right ... but the variances we see, we think are too large," Munroe said.

Munroe's report finds 94 per cent of the city's overtime comes from fire, transit, police and transportation and

public works.

The variance is most pronounced in Halifax Fire, where most employees don't get paid a premium for overtime.

Some councillors on the committee expressed concern that while there may not be a fiscal premium to that overtime, there could be health and safety concerns with some firefighters working more than double their scheduled hours in one two-week pay period.

Outgoing Halifax CAO Richard Butts said after the meeting that management "has a handle" on the situa-

tion, and blamed the uptick in overtime on a rough winter.

"We had unplanned and extraordinary events last winter. That contributed greatly to the increase in overtime in all the divisions that the auditor mentions," he said.

Butts said what's more important is that the city has come under budget on total wages in each of the last four years.

"While overtime is up and it doesn't look good ... overall we've fulfilled our management responsibility that we maintain and manage costs," he said.

154%

Percentage of budgeted overtime used by Halifax Fire in the first half of this fiscal year.

\$14.9M

Difference between budgeted and actual overtime paid out in the last four years.

"I am disappointed. We had hoped that we would make more progress on this."

Auditor General Larry Munroe

EDUCATION

University tuition hike 'pretty egregious'

Student advocates at Mount Saint Vincent University are disappointed the school will see a "pretty egregious" tuition hike of likely 6.5 per cent every fall for three years.

The university's board of governors voted Tuesday evening to approve a roughly 3.5 per cent increase to all undergrad tuitions, or \$21 per course which means an extra \$210 over a full-time year.

Adding the tuition reset to the yearly three per cent increase Mount Saint Vincent has used in the past brings the

total to likely 6.5 per cent, or about 20 per cent over three years.

"We're pretty disappointed with the decision. It's a pretty egregious increase in our opinion," Jon Grant, vice-president of advocacy for Mount Saint Vincent University Students' Union said Wednesday.

Before the vote, Grant and about a dozen students had protested the hike by standing with posters outside the meeting, and presenting postcards from students about how such a rise could mean choos-

"I think this will definitely affect enrollment rates."

Jon Grant

ing between school and food.

It's even worse for international students, Grant said, who would be hit with not only the reset and annual adjustment, but international "differential fees" of an extra \$20.83 per course.

Although Grant said students on the board were opposed to the reset and faculty agreed, ultimately the board voted in favour of the proposal.

Since all board decisions are usually kept confidential, Grant said they had to push for the information to be given to the rest of the students.

"It's definitely problematic because it restricts us from reaching out to our students and telling them what's going on," Grant said.

HALEY RYAN/METRO

STUDENTS

Schools, parents to debate travel



Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

The province's education minister has asked all boards to check in with schools and parents to see if they're comfortable with international trips.

On Tuesday, Education Minister Karen Casey said she had asked school boards to review how parents feel about their children possibly travelling outside Canada, but there is no "ban" on trips as of now.

"Decisions around international travel will be made by school boards, schools and parents," a statement from education department spokeswoman Michelle Lucas said.

Some Albertan school districts have suspended international student trips in recent weeks after terrorist attacks in California and Paris.

Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said last week he knows of no reason why school boards should cancel international student trips over terrorism fears, but the decision ultimately rests with educators.

Doug Hadley, spokesman for the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), said Tuesday they will certainly follow the minister's request but had no details on when parents and schools would be consulted.

International trips would only concern high school students and parents, Hadley said.

"We will come up with a process for doing that, and we'll communicate with schools," Hadley said. - WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



Mount Saint Vincent University students line the hallway to protest before a board of governors meeting Tuesday evening.

JEFF HARPER/METRO

Bill 148

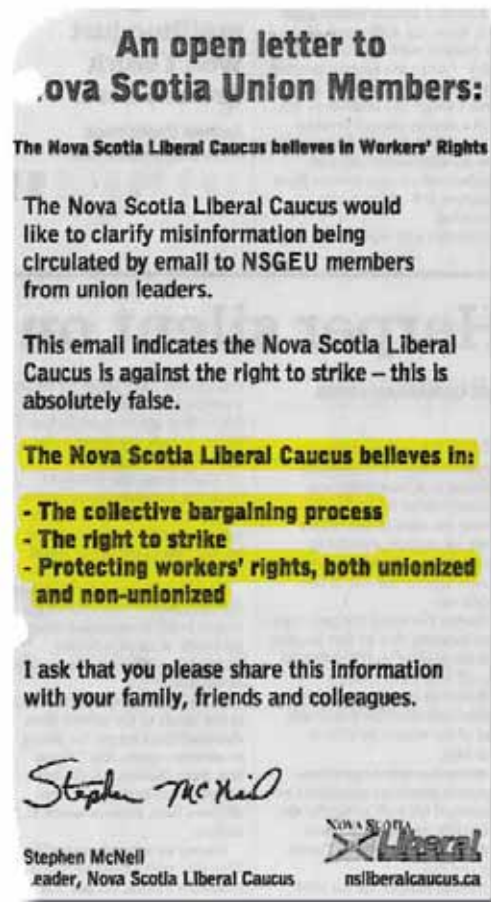
is bad for Nova Scotia.

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The NSGEU will be taking legal action against this legislation.

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Brunch-only restaurant stirs up city dining scene

EATING OUT

Black Sheep fills a spot downtown, chef says

Julia Manoukian
For Metro | Halifax

Two local chefs are serving up a new brunch-only restaurant in Halifax, which is set to open Friday.

Black Sheep Halifax, located at 1569 Dresden Row, is owned and operated by Dave Woodley and John House, two former Gio chefs, each with over a decade experience in fine dining.

Woodley said the spot fills a need for a non-corporate all day brunch downtown.

"I've been in the industry in Halifax for a long time and you don't see a lot of places that are owned by chefs. I think it'll bring a good spin on things," he said.

"Basically our thing is just doing everything from scratch. We're making our own bread, we're smoking our own bacon, we'll have handmade pastas."

Brunch will be served from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and in the evening, transform into more of a lounge, serving cocktails, craft beer and small plates.

"We're going to be doing really frequent menu changes,



Co-owners and chefs Dave Woodley, left, and John House stand behind the hemlock bar on Wednesday in their new restaurant, The Black Sheep. JEFF HARPER/METRO

and it's basically just what inspires us and what's in season," said Woodley, adding they'll be getting in whole animals to take apart for new menu items.

While Black Sheep doesn't market as exclusively local, the two use local farms for produce and meat, fill their taps with Propeller beer and have decorated the place with materials



Basically our thing is just doing everything from scratch.

Chef and co-owner Dave Woodley

from a local wood lot — the bar, for example, is hemlock.

On the walls also hang 18 pieces of original art by mixed-media artist Mark Hamilton.

menu yet."

So why Black Sheep?

"I've been telling people that we really like the idea of using an animal name and that Red Lobster was already taken so we had to go with this," House jokes. "I feel that everybody can associate with being a black sheep at one point or another," adds Woodley.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

SandJam moving out of town

SandJam will not be returning to Halifax's waterfront this summer — instead, it will take place in Summerside, P.E.I.

Derek Martin, president of Sports and Entertainment Atlantic, said cheaper costs were a factor in the move.

"It's a pretty intense event to do in Halifax in terms of bringing in the sand and generating the funding we need," said Martin.

He said SandJam has had great success in Halifax, but organizers wanted to try out a different city and Summerside had been interested in hosting for a number of years.

The event was held on the waterfront from 2011 to 2014. No SandJam event was held in 2015.

"The event that we're able to do in Summerside is a little different than the one we did in Halifax in terms of the infrastructure they already have there," said Martin.

"We think it makes a great event venue," he added.

Martin said bringing the event back to Halifax is certainly not off the table.

"Ideally we might have multiple locations around the Maritimes or even around Canada."

The event in Summerside will take place from July 22 to 24.

JULIA MANOUKIAN/FOR METRO



IN BRIEF

Masked cyclists arrested after pair of robberies

Halifax police say two masked men on bicycles are responsible for a pair of robberies on the peninsula Tuesday night.

The first happened just before 11 p.m. when an 18-year-old man was robbed at knifepoint on Coburg Road, by two men on bicycles wearing masks.

"Within the hour," a 32-year-old man was robbed at knifepoint on Mumford Road by two cyclists matching the same description.

Just after midnight, police found one man on a bike at Bayers Road and Romans Avenue, and ended up arresting a 21-year-old man and a 22-year-old man for the robberies earlier in the night.

The pair was scheduled to appear in Halifax provincial court Wednesday morning to face a number of charges including robbery with violence, carrying a concealed weapon and disguise with intent.

METRO

Appeal in man's death case to be heard next month

A man convicted by a jury of manslaughter, in the death of Philip Boudreau, will have his bid for a lesser sentenced heard by the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal on Jan. 22.

Joseph James Landry, 67, was found guilty of manslaughter in the death of Philip Boudreau last year following a lengthy trial in Port Hawkesbury.

It was alleged that the crew of the lobster fish-

ing vessel Twin Maggies engaged in an on-water altercation with Boudreau on the morning of June 1, 2013, suspecting he was tampering with their traps.

Landry was handed a 14-year prison sentence. His notice filed with the court listed the grounds of appeal as the trial judge making findings of fact not consistent with the jury's verdict and the judge imposing a sentence "which was demonstrably harsh and excessive."

It also noted that Landry will ask for an order that the sentence be reduced to seven years, less pre-sentence remand credit. The defence had sought a seven-year sentence while the Crown had asked for 15 years.

TC MEDIA

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SMALL BUSINESS

Novel photo booth offers professional experience



Zane Woodford
Metro | Halifax

Looking for a snazzy new headshot for your LinkedIn page, but don't have the cash for a professional studio session?

A new business in Halifax may have the solution.

Iris Booth is the world's first "pro photo booth" — like the old-school kind, but with a professional camera, professional lighting and high-resolution results.

"We've condensed professional photography into a booth," said Iris Booth creator and owner Sue Siri, just minutes after opening her first booth Wednesday at Sophie's Place on Spring Garden Road. Siri has been a professional

photographer for nearly 30 years. Just over a year ago, she started getting tired of lugging around all her heavy photo gear and came up with the idea.

She started working on a prototype with the help of Dalhousie University's Innovation in Design lab, and got a beta version up and running.

She's since refined the booths, finding a way to use locally sourced materials, and now the Iris Booth is ready for its close-up.

It looks nothing like the old, dark, curtained photo booths of years past; it's bigger, brighter, and a lot more high-tech.

To get in the booth, you go to a website, create an account and pay \$20. The site generates a QR code, and a web camera on the outside of the booth scans it and opens the door.

Inside, a screen below the lens shows you how you look.

After fixing your hair, you can take six photos using a pedal at your feet to click the shutter.

You can edit the photos — whiten your teeth, remove a



People prefer to be in control of their own image.

Sue Siri,
creator of Iris Booth

pimple or add a filter — and the results are sent directly to your smartphone.

The photos look like they were shot and edited by a professional photographer, but the process is like taking a selfie on an iPhone.

"I think that's a huge incentive: just the fact that you're in control of your image," Siri said.

+ EXPANSION

Siri is hoping to install two more of the booths in Halifax early in the new year, and she's already looking at Toronto and New York for potential expansion.



Photographer Sue Siri sits inside the new Iris Booth on Wednesday. JEFF HARPER/METRO

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BOBBY CURTOLA

Singer's wife killed in crash

The identity of a Nova Scotia woman killed in Tuesday's fatal highway accident has been released.

Karyn Rochford died Dec. 15 after a crash on Highway 103.

The Port Mouton resident was identified in a statement on husband Bobby Curtola's Facebook page.

Curtola is well known as a Canadian pop singer who rose to fame in the 1960s and is still an active performer.

Police say Rochford was 73.

"Karyn is the love of his life and their families would appreciate that you respect their privacy and will make further announcements after the funeral," the statement reads.



Bobby Curtola is mourning the loss of his wife, Karyn Rochford. FACEBOOK

Condolences have been appearing by the hundreds on Curtola's fan page. The head-on crash happened around 1 p.m. between Bridgewater and Blockhouse.

A 68-year-old man involved in

the crash was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

A RCMP spokesman said weather was believed to have played a role in the accident.

TC MEDIA

WILDLIFE

Dead deer left on the doorstep

Roadkill isn't pretty at the best of times, but when a dead deer is deposited on your front steps it's even more disturbing.

That's what happened at the home of Kierstin Comeau and Trevor Penney on Dec. 12 on Highway 203 between

Carleton and Shelburne.

Comeau says she left for town at 6 p.m. and a friend notified Penney that the deer was on the steps at 9:30 p.m.

"It looked like it was hit and my boyfriend and his friend... said it had to have been dead for at least a day or two," said

Comeau. Tire tracks are evident where a vehicle appeared to have backed up to the steps, then "spun out" when leaving, she said.

Department of Natural Resources officers picked up the deer on Monday afternoon.

TC MEDIA



The Giacomantonio's lights on Connaught Ave. is proving to be a hit again. ALY THOMSON/FOR METRO

See the light

BACKSTAGE PASS

Eat your heart out, Griswold: There are new bulbs in town

Aly Thomson
Metro | Halifax

Long before the Christmas trees hit the lots and festive music starts playing in shopping malls, Gordon Woodworth is sitting in his Fairview home, testing thousands of tiny colourful bulbs in preparation for the upcoming holiday season.

Woodworth has been lighting up his front yard at the top of Sunnysbrae Avenue for two decades, and every Christmas there's something new.

"I've been adding to it every year for the last 20 years. There's probably somewhere around 4,000 lights," said Woodworth, adding the hours of groundwork begins in October.

"I just kept doing it over the years. We have lots of neat interactions with families and children."

Rainbow lights spiral around a large tree amidst dozens of brightly lit Christmas characters in Woodworth's humble yard.

Colourful string lights on the house and bushes flicker to the beat of I Saw Three Ships as a glowing Grumpy

Dec'd out

Other places you can check out awe-inspiring Christmas light displays:

- 1) Ridgevale Subdivision, Bedford
- 2) Cresthaven Drive, Halifax
- 3) Louisburg Lane and Skeena Street, Dartmouth
- 4) Appian Way, Dartmouth
- 5) Chinook Court, Dartmouth
- 6) Waverley Road, Fall River
- 7) Holland Road, Fletchers Lake

Cat mingles with a skiing pig named Arnold and a life-sized wooden Santa — one of several pieces Woodworth made himself.

"Sometimes our guests say, 'Aren't you disturbed by the lack of privacy?'" said Woodworth as a tour bus slowly drove by outside.

"But we don't mind. It's only for a short time every year and we've been very fortunate that we've never had any vandalism."

A few kilometres away on Connaught Avenue, dozens of people wear wondrous smiles as they stand in front of Nick and Vicki Giacomantonio's extravagantly lit home.

A Charlie Brown Christmas plays on a large projection screen in front of a wonderland of luminescent holiday decorations, including a Peanuts-themed nativity scene.

A few doors down, Carman Giacomantonio's radiantly lit house rivals that of his brother's. But despite the rumours, Nick Giacomantonio says there's no competition between the siblings.

"It's just a myth," said Giacomantonio with a laugh.

Giacomantonio said the extraordinary tradition, now in its 10th year, actually started because of his mother, who is from Whitney Pier in Cape Breton.

"We used to go home there with our children all the time, but that became progressively impossible," said Giacomantonio, whose three children are now 18, 21 and 24.

"So she started coming down here. She would stay at my house one year and Carman's the next. She always wanted big Christmas lights, so we started decorating for her, and then all hell broke loose."

The Giacomantonio brothers each use their Christmas displays to collect for local charities, including the food bank, the Salvation Army and the Metro Turning Point men's shelter.

Nick Giacomantonio said last year, they collected more than \$1,800, as well as a plethora of toys, clothes, books and other items.



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Q&A

3 takeaways from Trudeau's town hall



Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took questions from journalists and the public at an hour-long town hall hosted by Maclean's Magazine at the National Arts Centre Wednesday. Here are three notable moments from his Q&A.

1 CF-18s

Trudeau said U.S. President Barack Obama hasn't asked him to reconsider his pledge to withdraw Canada's CF-18 fighter jets from the fight against ISIL. "He didn't ask me to keep those in, nor would I have kept them in if he had asked me."

2 Donald Trump

Asked about Donald Trump's politics, Trudeau shied away from commenting directly on U.S. politics. But without mentioning Trump's name, he slammed "the politics of intolerance and hateful rhetoric."

3 Charm offensive

Trudeau was asked about his charm offensive since taking office, such as posing in Vogue Magazine. "It's not about image. It's about substance," he said. "That's what so many of my political opponents haven't understood." He said serving Canadians well means listening to them and engaging in "real conversations." It also means talking to a broad range of publications.

STAR WARS

Sick kids treated to premiere with PM

It's not exactly the Official Secrets Act, but it's close.

Eleven kids from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa had to swear not to disclose the plot of the upcoming Star Wars: The Force Awakens until it comes out in theatres Friday.

For that, they got to attend a private preview on Tuesday night with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"Last night they were treated like royalty," Isabelle Mailloux of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Foundation.

"He made them feel special," Mailloux said. "Each one was a special guest. It was adorable."

The children ranged from eight to 18 and have a variety of ailments. Some are being treated for cancer. One has lost a leg. Another is on dialysis.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted out this photo from his Twitter account. TWITTER.COM

IN BRIEF

Canada presses North Korea for access to pastor
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau expressed "tremendous concern" at the life sentence handed to a Canadian pastor in North Korea on Wednesday, saying consular officials would work to stand up for his rights. Hyeon Soo Lim was sentenced to life in prison with hard labour by North Korea's Supreme Court for what it called crimes against the state. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau meets with indigenous leaders
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

confesses he can't compel an apology from the Pope for the role of the Catholic Church in Canada's residential school system. But Trudeau says he looks forward to raising the matter with the pontiff. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Black endorses Trump
Donald Trump hasn't received too many ringing endorsements from famous conservative elites — but he's just received praise from one Canadians know well. Conrad Black has penned a piece titled, "Trump Is The Good Guy." THE CANADIAN PRESS



Clockwise from left: French Foreign Minister and COP21 President Laurent Fabius with United Nations General Secretary of the Climate Convention Christiana Figueres, COP21 General Secretary Pierre-Henri Guignard and UN Deputy Executive Secretary of the Climate Change Secretariat Richard Kinley, during the COP21 United Nations Conference on climate change, on Dec. 2.

ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Single word almost kills climate deal

'SHALL'

Canadian apologizes for error in document

A single one-syllable, five-letter word almost scuttled the Paris climate deal, and it was a Canadian who had to literally sit in front of the world and sort it out at the 11th hour.

Not to mention apologize for an error the United States would never accept if allowed to stand.

The apology came from Winnipeg-born Richard Kinley. Previously an official with the Canadian government, Kinley is

second-in-command to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary to the United Nations-led Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This means Kinley manages the UN's climate shop, including the behind-the-scenes machinery that led to the final Paris text — version L9 — which carried the following contentious line: "Developed country parties shall continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets."

The problem word is "shall." In international law that seemingly benign word creates a legally binding commitment. But, such obligations require Senate approval in the U.S. — at least as they relate to emissions targets. If

the "shall" were allowed to stay, there would be no chance U.S. President Barack Obama could secure domestic support for the agreement.

Republicans in the Senate would vote it down, and the Paris climate change deal would fall apart.

When U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry first saw the sentence he was taken aback, telling a reporter: "We cannot do this and we will not do this."

There were two options: reopen the text for further revision, which risked having other countries step forward with other demands, or admit the mistake — in front of delegates from 196 countries.

The latter option was chosen,



Richard Kinley
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

and it was Kinley who had to break the news that the word "shall" in Article 4, Paragraph 4 was the wrong word. It needed to be changed to "should."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MANITOBA

Mennonite man jailed for assaulting kids

A man from an old-order Mennonite community in Manitoba has been sentenced to one year in jail after court heard children were beaten with leather straps and cattle prods to "save" them from the "sin of lust."

The 59-year-old man was an elder in the community and was sentenced earlier this week for assault and assault with a weapon involving seven children.

Court was told the accused was one of four key leaders in the community who used tools to dole out discipline.

Children were denied food and



This case is about domination and abuse. Zealous adults conceived that 'strong punishment' was necessary to save children from the sin of lust.

Crown attorney James Ross

sleep, slapped, in some cases hit with whips or wood, and given electric shocks with a cattle prod, court documents said.

"It was an obsessive campaign to remove an imagined evil," Crown attorney James Ross wrote as part of a one-year sentencing

recommendation that was agreed to by the defence.

Court heard that some community leaders falsely believed that children had become sexually active and would punish the children repeatedly.

The identities of the children

are protected under a publication ban and The Canadian Press is not naming any of the accused or the small community where they live.

Another member of the community was sentenced earlier this month to six months in jail. The cases of two other men are still before the courts.

The abuse occurred between 2011 and 2013. When police and child welfare workers moved into the isolated community, they seized 42 children and more than a dozen adults were charged.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Halo Kitty

Russian Orthodox Church puts the "cat" in Catholic with new calendar

A group of Christian enthusiasts has released a calendar showing an unexpected face of the Russian Orthodox Church: cat-loving priests.

The Priest and Cat calendar released earlier this month by photographer Anna Galperina and editor Ksenia Luchenko shows 12 Orthodox priests at their homes posing with their cats.

Luchenko said the idea was totally spontaneous but it can now be viewed as a Russian Orthodox answer to the annual Italian Calendario Romano, featuring handsome young priests of the Roman Catholic Church,

and the Gatti di Roma calendar filled with Rome's cats.

Luchenko said some of priests refused to be photographed, fearing that the project would be too "pop."

"To be honest, it feels a bit strange, when you call priests and ask: 'Father, tell me please, do you have a cat? Oh, you do? Great!' she said. 'So the initial reaction was a bit wary.'"

Father Pyotr Dynnikov who posed as Mr. February said he liked the idea because the calendar lends the church a lighter and less official dimension.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



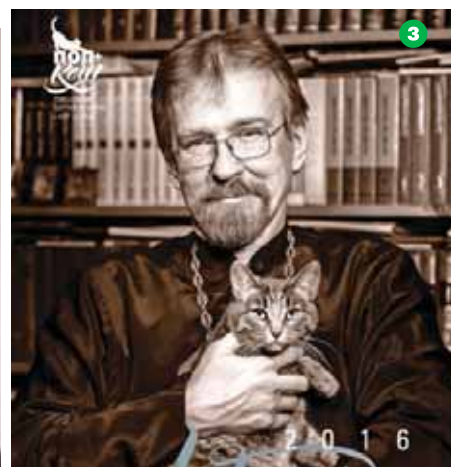
A small sampling of 12 months of monks and their cats:

1 Russian monk Grigory (Pobozhin) with his cat Koshka

2 Russian monk Feodorit (Senchukov) with Monya

3 Russian clergyman Sergei Kruglov with his cat Shurik

ALL IMAGES ANNA GALPERINA/ARTOS/
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



IN BRIEF

Refugees mistreated in Turkey: Rights group

Amnesty International says Turkey has rounded up refugees and asylum-seekers since September and transported them to detention centres where some were mistreated or forcibly returned to Syria and Iraq. Amnesty said the EU risks being "complicit in serious human rights violations."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cosby lawsuit moved to federal court

A lawsuit against Bill Cosby is being moved to federal court. His accuser, Renita Hill, 48, sued in October claiming Cosby drugged and had sex with her several times after they met on a children's educational TV show in 1983.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Qataris abducted in Iraq

In a remote desert area in southern Iraq, unidentified gunmen driving in SUVs raided a camp for falconry hunters on Wednesday, abducting up to 26 Qataris, Iraqi officials said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RESEARCH

Old whaling logs reveal climate change



New Bedford Whaling Museum senior maritime historian Michael Dyer with several whaling vessel log books

STEPHAN SAVOIA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maritime historians, climate scientists and ordinary citizens are coming together on a project to study the logbooks of 19th-century whaling ships to better understand modern-day climate change and Arctic weather patterns.

Whaling ships kept meticulous daily logbooks of weather conditions during their often years-long voyages searching the globe for whales, valued for their light-giving oil, said Michael Dyer, senior maritime historian at the New Bedford

Whaling Museum in Massachusetts, which is supplying much of the data.

Some logs include information about life on board, such as sailors falling overboard or being disciplined for stealing or other transgressions, and of course, notations whenever whales are spotted. More important for this project, they include precise longitude and latitude measurements, weather conditions, the presence of icebergs and the edge of the ice shelf.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JAPAN

Wife, husband must share surname: Court

Japan's Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that requiring married couples to have the same surname is constitutional, dealing a blow to a longtime effort for gender equality.

The law does not say which partner must give up his or her name. In practice, it has been the woman. Men are seen as more powerful in Japanese traditional culture. But as women have careers, some argue that changing surnames is confusing. Some Japanese

women continue to use their maiden name professionally, even after their surnames are legally changed following marriage. Some couples simply don't register their marriages.

Kaori Okuni, one of the plaintiffs, was deeply disappointed.

"This has consequences for the future, meaning suffering for those who plan to marry and those who are set to be born," she said.

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INDIA

Court tackles dirty air

India's top court issued several orders Wednesday to fight record pollution in New Delhi, including a three-month ban on the sale of large diesel vehicles and a stiff hike on the toll for trucks entering the capital.

The Supreme Court also banned trucks from entering the city if they're more than 10 years old or are just transiting through. In addition, all taxis in the area, including private ride-hailing services such as Uber, have to switch to compressed natural gas by March 31.

The orders have been widely welcomed by environmentalists, who said strong action has been required because New Delhi is choking with dense smog.

FATALITIES

Air pollution contributes to more than 600,000 deaths each year in India.

Last year, the World Health Organization named New Delhi the world's most polluted city, with 12 other Indian cities ranking among the worst 20.

This year in New Delhi, Indian environment monitoring authorities have found record levels of the tiny, inhalable particles that are measured to indicate pollution levels.

The particles — called PM2.5 — are of particular concern because, with diameters no greater than 2.5 micrometres, they're small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Freshwater lakes are heating up fast

CLIMATE

Lake Superior second-fastest warming lake in world: study

Our rapidly warming world has another high-profile victim — lakes.

An alarming new study says freshwater lakes are warming at more than twice the pace of oceans, and Lake Superior is the second-fastest warming lake in the world, behind Sweden's Lake Fracksjon.

The rest of the Great Lakes

are also faring dismally, the study says, putting native fish in jeopardy, increasing the risk of invasive species and raising fears of widespread algae blooms.

The study, by a team of international scientists, analyzed data from hundreds of lakes around the world. It found that summer surface temperatures rose by about 0.34 C on average between 1985 and 2009.

That may not sound like a lot, acknowledged Sapna Sharma, the lead author of the study and an assistant professor in the faculty of science at York University. But put that in context with air temper-

“

It was shocking to find that over 90 per cent are warming.

Sapna Sharma, lead author of the study

atures and ocean temperature increase and “you see there is a big difference,” she said.

Average air temperatures over the same period have warmed about 0.24 C, while oceans have warmed about 0.11 C, she said.

Lakes that are covered with

ice in winter, like most Canadian lakes, are warming twice as fast because the lakes are increasingly ice-free earlier and for longer periods.

“By the time you get to summer, there is a longer period of open ice and more time for lakes to warm faster,” Sharma said.

The Great Lakes are also facing an increase in solar radiation, another factor for the rapid warming of freshwater lakes.

The study, published Wednesday in *Geophysical Research Letters*, examined data from 236 lakes. Some readings came from NASA satellites; others came from data collected on the ground. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

0.34

Average degrees in Celsius by which summer surface lake temperatures have risen between 1985-2009.

0.24

Average degrees in Celsius by which air temperatures have risen in the same time period.

0.11

Average degrees in Celsius by which oceans have warmed from 1985-2009.



Waves crash on shore during a November gale at Lake Superior's Government Beach in Ontario. A new study shows Lake Superior is the second-fastest-warming lake in the world, and that lakes on average are warming much faster than the climate as a whole. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE/HANDOUT

ANGOLA

Rights group urges Minaj to cancel concert

A rights group is lobbying rapper Nicki Minaj to cancel her Saturday concert in Luanda, Angola, a country often criticized for corruption and human rights abuses.

The Human Rights Foundation had written to Minaj, urging her to cancel the show and instead support a local rapper who has been jailed along with other activists.

Minaj's representative did not immediately respond. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANCE

Charlie Hebdo giving entire \$4M in donations to victims

Charlie Hebdo, the satirical newspaper in Paris whose staff had been decimated by Islamic extremist gunmen and then beset by internal tensions over an unexpected influx of donations and readers, said Wednesday it will turn over all the money to victims of the three days of attacks in January.

A pair of French-born brothers killed 12 people during an editorial meeting on Jan. 7. The publication had been targeted for its caricatures of the Proph-

et Muhammad.

The three days of attacks, co-ordinated with a third man targeting a kosher supermarket and policewoman, left a total of 17 dead before the gunmen were shot to death in police raids.

Suddenly flush with cash from donations and a global readership, the weekly saw tension among surviving

staff, in large part over the money.

In a statement Wednesday, Charlie Hebdo said it would turn over nearly \$4.4 million US, and that the French government had appointed an oversight committee to determine

how the money would be redistributed in coming weeks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

84

The number of countries from which Charlie Hebdo received donations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED STATES

Mistrial in first Freddie Gray case

The first effort to find a police officer criminally responsible for Freddie Gray's death from a broken neck in a police van ended Wednesday with a hung jury and a mistrial in Baltimore, Md.

Six officers have been charged in Gray's death. William Porter has been accused of failing to get medical help for a wounded Gray and has been charged with assault, manslaughter, misconduct in office and reckless endangerment.

It was not immediately clear whether he will face a retrial.

Gray, 25, who had been suspected of possessing an illegal switchblade, was arrested while fleeing from officers and died April 19, a week after his neck was broken inside a police van. He had been left handcuffed, shackled and face-down on the van's floor. An autopsy concluded he probably couldn't brace himself whenever the van turned a corner or braked suddenly. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



COMPUTER LITERACY PUSH TO CREATE TECHIE TYKES

Third-grader Jaysean Erby solves a coding problem as Apple CEO Tim Cook watches from behind during a coding workshop at an Apple Store in New York last week. There's a push across the U.S. to improve computer literacy in elementary school, and entrepreneurs are jumping aboard. But some critics warn that pushing advanced concepts on younger kids could frustrate them and turn them off computer science completely. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

FINANCIAL FUTURE

Parents put off retirement to help kids

Half of Canadian parents say they would postpone retirement because of concerns about the financial future of their children.

Parents with children aged 18 to 24 said they were willing to trade some of their own financial security to help out their kids in a changing economy, BMO Wealth Management said in a report.

Half said they would be willing to retire later than planned,

one-third said they would save less for retirement, and 22 per cent said they would take on debt.

Roughly the same proportion who said they would retire later than planned said they received little or no support from their parents when they were young adults themselves.

22%

The percentage of parents who said they would take on debt to help their kids in a changing economy.

The biggest financial concern for parents about their children was financial problems caused by debt, followed by difficulties achieving financial independence and insufficient employment.

The so-called millennial generation of those born after 1980 faces different economic realities than

their parents, especially after the 2008 financial crisis.

The number of contract workers has grown more than four times faster than the number of full-time employees since 2008, according to Statistics Canada. The number of Canadians aged 25 to 44 in full-time employment is up 1.2 per cent since 2008, compared with a 24.9 per cent rise in contract work.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada, U.S. to part ways

INTEREST RATE

BoC won't match Federal Reserve hike, expert predicts

The U.S. Federal Reserve raised its interest rate Wednesday, exerting downward pressure on the loonie that has been steadily dropping in recent months as global oil prices plunged.

The American central bank lifted its key rate by a quarter-point to a range of 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent, ending a seven-year period of near-zero borrowing rates.

Scott Guitard, a portfolio manager at Fiduciary Trust Canada, said climbing American interest rates will likely mean the opposite for the Canadian dollar.

He also predicts Canada's central bank will stick with

+ ECONOMY

Faith restored

Wednesday's action reflects the U.S. Federal Reserve's belief that the American economy has finally regained enough strength 6 ½ years after the Great Recession ended to withstand modestly higher borrowing rates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

its decision to hold steady on its key lending rate even if the loonie falls further because of enduring low oil prices.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, speaking ahead of the announcement, said it was a good sign the American economy was seeing a resurgence, but promised to examine the challenges that a lower dollar poses for the Canadian economy. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IN BRIEF

Shaw buying Wind Mobile

Shaw Communications has reached an agreement to buy Wind Mobile in a transaction valued at \$1.6 billion. The Calgary-based telecommunications company says it will acquire a full interest in parent company Mid-Bowline Group, which owns Wind. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

A lengthy disruption over Katie the dog gives me hope

Toronto ground to a halt for two hours yesterday over the life-and-death drama of Katie, the German shepherd.

The north-south subway line was out of service while transit workers rescued the dog from the track rails, where she mysteriously got caught.

Media live-tweeted updates from the scene ("Did she make it?" my colleagues kept asking as they checked Twitter) and a few posted photos of Katie on a stretcher, wrapped in a bloodied blanket. For some, it was just too much.

"@680NEWS DELETE THIS INSENSITIVE PICTURE Would you post a picture of a person trapped on tracks? #topoli #Katie" tweeted @Hohummm.

"RIP" wrote another, after news broke Katie had been put down. "Very sad incident on the TTC tracks today," the mayor tweeted.

What kind people live in this city, I thought, as a dog swallowed our short attention spans and #katie started trending across Toronto. For others, that was all too much, too.

"Shuttle buses, thousands of people having their afternoon commute ruined, for a dog," an acquaintance texted. "Would the line have been shut for a raccoon? A squirrel? A rat?"

"What an incredible waste," he went on. "I hope the irresponsible dog owner gets the bill."

This is, to quote my acquaintance, an "incredible

example of something," or perhaps two things: our capacity to care, and our capacity to care on a scale.

A few years ago, researchers tested people's sympathy for humans (adult and baby) and dogs (adult and puppy).

"The 'winner' was not the puppy but the human infant. The puppy, however, came in a close second with the adult dog not far behind," Wired magazine reported, while noting that another study found people are more willing to save their personal pet than a "foreign tourist."

This could be considered depressing, but I don't think so. First, everyone hates tourists. More importantly, a lengthy disruption over a dog gives me cause for hope.

It shows that people do care about other beings, despite the common assumption we're living in the most selfish, dehumanizing society created.

Normally, shutdowns turn trains and subway stations into sweltering hellholes. This time, they were hellholes with a heart.

And I have faith the empathy hierarchy can be manipulated.

I'm sure we'll one day learn about the superior intellect of the raccoon (perhaps even the rat) and start adopting them as pets, thus improving the likelihood we'd stall a subway to save one. Tourists, though — they're screwed.

THOMAS WALKOM: ON THE CHALLENGE OF RECONCILIATION

The 3,231-page final report released Tuesday is a sweeping indictment of the entire history of Canada's treatment of aboriginal people.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to implement all 94 recommendations of the aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It's a tall order.

Tall because the commission, which was set up to focus on abuse suffered by aboriginal children in Canada's former residential school system, deals with far more than residential schools.

The 3,231-page final report released Tuesday is a sweeping indictment of the entire history of Canada's treatment of aboriginal people.

Among other things, it calls for a new relationship between indigenous people and Canada, one that would allow aboriginals self-determination, more control over resources and a direct role in making and interpreting laws that affect their collective rights.

Media coverage of the commission has tended to focus on the horrors suffered by native children forcibly removed from their families and sent to boarding schools — many of them run by mainstream Christian churches.

Those stories are indeed horrible. But the three-person commission chaired by Manitoba Justice Murray Sinclair did far more than hear testimony from former residential school students and staff.

It also focused on reconciliation, a term it defines broadly.

The commission's view of the past — of the historical relationship between aboriginals and non-aboriginals — is not rosy.

It places that relationship in the context of a European imperial system that deliberately

tried to replace indigenous peoples in the Americas with white settlers.

This system, it says, persisted in Canada after Confederation and was expressed in what the commission calls "cultural genocide" — a deliberate government policy that, until the 1960s, was designed to forcibly assimilate aboriginals into mainstream society.

Residential schools, the commission says, were no accident. They were aimed at destroying aboriginal cultures that mainstream society viewed as inferior.

True reconciliation, it says, can be achieved only when aboriginals regain their self-respect and when non-aboriginals understand the worth of indigenous culture.

How does this happen? Many recommendations involve education. Aboriginal history should be taught to

all children. Lawyers should learn about traditional aboriginal law. Journalism students should be taught aboriginal history in order to help them avoid tired stereotypes.

Such recommendations are politically easy. Provincial governments may be reluctant to spend money teaching aboriginal history. But they won't oppose the idea outright.

Nor will any sensible politician oppose recommendations calling on government to improve the health of aboriginal people (although, again, some may balk at spending money).

The Pope may or may not follow the commission's suggestion that he apologize for the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in residential schools. But it cost Trudeau nothing Wednesday to say he'd ask the Pontiff to do so.

Some recommendations

would be expensive to implement — such as one calling on government to alleviate poverty in order to reduce the number of aboriginal youth in jail.

But the toughest promise to be those dealing with political structure, resources and law.

True reconciliation, the commission says, can be accomplished only if Canada adopts a new vision "that fully embraces aboriginal peoples' right to self-determination within, and in partnership with, a viable Canadian sovereignty."

Noting that the Supreme Court has already ruled that aboriginal communities have a broad level of control over their traditional lands, the commission argues that indigenous people must be able to realize their full economic potential if reconciliation is to be achieved.

Larger first nations, it says, should be able to make "laws within their own communities."

Moreover, the whole nature of law should be rethought, first to integrate traditional aboriginal legal rules into Canadian practice and second to allow indigenous people "to become the law's architects and interpreters where it applies to their collective rights and interests."

That sounds a lot like a separate level of government and courts.

Trudeau signed onto the commission's bullet-point list of recommendations in June when they were first released. That was well before he saw the final report that explains them.

It will be interesting to see if, in the end, he goes as far as this very ambitious commission has suggested.

Thomas Walkom is a national affairs writer for the Toronto Star.

THE MICROTREND: Battle roy-owl



The forest isn't big enough for both of them. A turf war has broken out in the Pacific Northwest, and the instigator is the barred owl. Habit degradation in the Prairies has been driving the hearty invasive species west into the stomping grounds of the northern spotted owl. And the barred owl is having a hoot out-eating and out-breeding everything in its path. Everywhere it goes, the spotted owl is declining fast: By up to 77 percent in Washington and 68 percent in Oregon since 1985, says a new U.S. study. Hardly a handful are left in B.C. As if it wasn't tough enough out there for a spotted owl: Development has destroyed the old-growth trees where it likes to nest and pushed it away from its favourite prey — a major problem for these polka-dotted picky eaters. The areas where spotted owl populations are sliding slowest have gotten human help with removing the nasty new neighbours. SOURCE: THE WASHINGTON POST

Residential schools, the commission says, were no accident.

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Big Bang's big lead up

With Sheldon and Amy about to have sex on the long-running sitcom, here's a look back at key moments in their relationship. Beware: spoilers ahead. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**



ALL PHOTOS: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE/ISTOCK/CONTRIBUTED

MIDSEASON FINALE

The Opening Night Excitation

For nine seasons, the sexuality of Sheldon Cooper (Jim Parsons) on The Big Bang Theory has been a rich source of speculation. Essays devoted to his asexuality, sexual orientation and overall social survival skills have graced publications big and small, sending viewers into a frenzy when the character finally settled into a relationship with Amy Farrah Fowler (Mayim Bialik). Still, the couple could barely hold hands in public, let alone make out or get physical between the sheets. Until now, that is. On Thursday's midseason finale (8 p.m. on CTV and CBS), The Opening Night Excitation, Sheldon decides to skip the opening night of Star Wars to spend Amy's birthday with her now that they're back together. His gift? Finally giving in to coitus. "Believe it or not they have been dating on and off for five-and-a-half years now, and that was enough time for Amy to wait," showrunner Steven Molaro told Torstar News Service. "It just seemed like the perfect culmination of their breakup story arc, especially with the upcoming release of Star Wars." Molaro was able to lend an insider's perspective to some of the biggest Sheldon and Amy moments on The Big Bang Theory, and what they mean now that the couple has officially "hooked up."



SEASON 7, EPISODE 15,

The first (real) kiss

Sheldon may have first kissed Amy to prove a point, but 11 seconds later it became clear that he liked it a lot more than he thought he would. Turns out even a man who aspired to be as emotionless as Spock can get weak in the knees. "We love these characters and they're real to us," Molaro says. "I remember when we were writing that kiss on the train, we weren't fighting in the writers' room, but there was a tension and a heat to our debating how it should play out."



SEASON 8, EPISODE 8

The first "I love you"

Sheldon may have been freaked out by prom, but he had no qualms about how he felt toward Amy. When she couldn't spit out the words "I love you," he went first with a sweet little, "I love you, too." "There was definitely some heated discussion about how exactly it should go down, but when we landed on the thought that Amy was struggling to get the words out, and that their first I love you was actually an I love you too, that seemed really interesting and appealing to us," Molaro says.



SEASON 4, EPISODE 20

The sex rumour

Before Thursday night, the closest Amy and Sheldon got to being intimate was when they decided to put a gossip theory to the test: by spreading the rumour that they had sex. "When Penny (Kaley Cuoco) tells Koothrappali (Kunal Nayyar) that Sheldon and Amy were going to be intimate, Koothrappali said, 'Shut your ass.' . . . We were talking about how funny that was to us."

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LOST CIVILIZATION

Author Graham Hancock is back with alt history sequel

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada



Twenty years ago, when Graham Hancock's book *Fingerprints of the Gods* was first published, it caused quite the stir among archaeologists, historians and conspiracy theorists. After years of research, the U.K. journalist hypothesized that 12,800 years ago, a massive, cataclysmic comet had hit the Earth, essentially wiping out a highly advanced ancient civilization. The remaining survivors then canvassed the world, landing in such places as Egypt, Turkey and Peru, in hopes of spreading their wisdom. Some of those sages or magicians as they were known, were responsible for constructing such wonders as the Sphinx, which Hancock's book suggests actually predated the ancient Egyptians.

Although Hancock's theories of a lost civilization were dismissed by experts (he's been referred to as both a pseudoscientist and a "Pyramidiot"), readers didn't care — and neither did he. The book sold more than 7 million copies worldwide, and turned Hancock into an icon of the "alternative history" movement. He has now returned with more evidence to back up his first book with its sequel, *Magicians of the Gods*.

Hancock still has his fair share of naysayers, but it's a new generation of younger fans who showed up at his recent sold-out 22-stop tour across the U.S. and Canada. His message is appealing to younger, social-media-savvy readers, many of who are cynical about old-school power structures in the aftermath of whistleblowers such as Julian Assange and Edward Snowden.

"There is a deep distrust of authority now. It's grounded; it's not a conspiracy theory. We know that we've been lied to quite often, for example, about the Iraq War. I think those lies have devalued the currency of authority," says Hancock, who describes *Magicians of the Gods* as a fundamentally rebellious book. "It's not enough for an archaeologist to say any-

more, 'Look, I know this is how things are.' It turns people off now. They'd rather see people engage with the ideas."

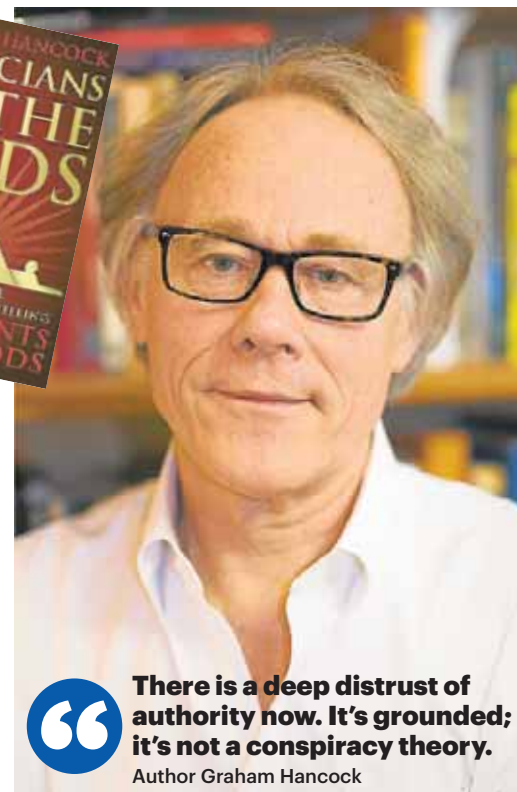
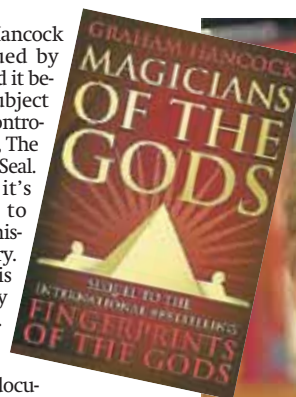
As Hancock was writing his first book, he says he couldn't "point out that smoking gun," but that within the last eight years, mainstream science journals have presented more evidence that prove his theory about the massive extinction. Perhaps the most challenging or troublesome idea in *Magicians of the Gods* is the suggestion that a 20-mile-wide fragment of the original comet is potentially going to hit Earth in 2030 — an event referred to in various cultures as the "Great Return." When asked how we should prepare for such an occasion, Hancock says that as a journalist, it's his role to report the evidence as he uncovers it, not suggest a course of action.

Hancock's background as a reporter is how he was introduced to alternative history in the first place. During the 1970s and '80s, he covered East Africa for the *London Times* and *The Economist*. While in Ethiopia he became intrigued with a story about how the lost covenant of the ark has been hidden in the country for centuries. Although experts debunked

the claim, Hancock was intrigued by the story and it became the subject of his first controversial book, *The Sign and the Seal*.

"I think it's important to realize that history is a story. And that it is often a story told by men. The further back you go, the less documents there are to draw your historical narratives from. The more it becomes a matter of speculation, and putting bits and pieces together," he says. "It's really a suggestion, an interpretation, a construing of data. I don't think it's healthy for this very important data about our past, who we are, and what we're doing here to be entrusted solely in the hands of a very small group of scholars. Twenty years ago it was enough for professor X or Y to say this is impossible, it can't be true. But that doesn't work today."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.



There is a deep distrust of authority now. It's grounded; it's not a conspiracy theory.

Author Graham Hancock

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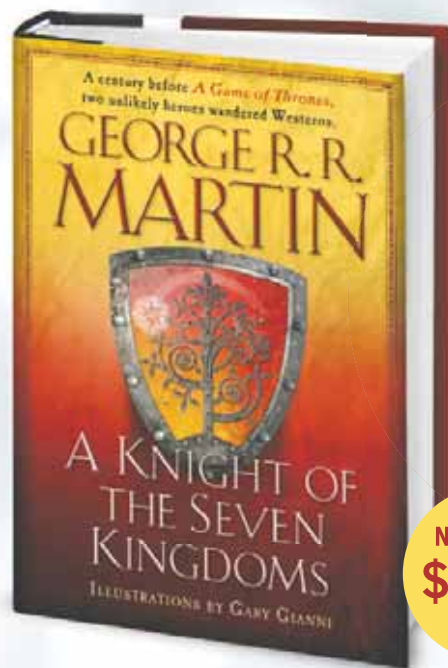


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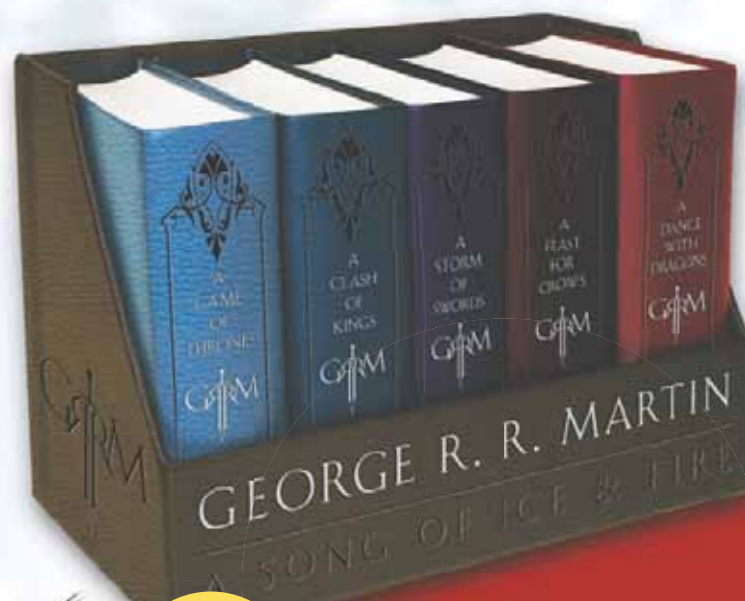
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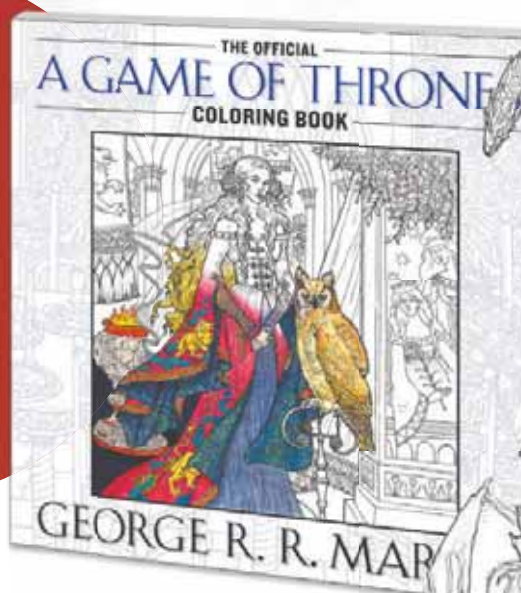
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JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

Empire's emotional toll

THE SHOW: *Empire*, Season 2, Episode 10 (City/Fox)
THE MOMENT: The Spit

Record mogul Cookie Lyon (Taraji P. Henson) is having quite the day. Award nominations are being announced, and her ex-husband Lucious (Terrence Howard) and two sons are candidates. She's hosting a concert at the prison where she did 17 years.

She's running interference for her openly gay son, who is secretly dating a woman (Alicia Keys). And she's racing to a boardroom vote, because scheming lesbian Mimi (Marissa Tomei) wants to kick Lucious out. Plus, she's doing it all in a skintight leather dress and a massive black-and-white striped fur chubbie. Just as Cookie's youngest son, Hakeem, is casting the deciding vote, who sidles in but Camilla (Naomi Campbell) — Hakeem's ex-girlfriend, and Tomei's new wife! Sporting a huge fur chubbie of her own! Camilla smirks. She has it rigged. Cookie spits in her face.

Wowza! Five other series



Five other series put together won't dazzle as much as five minutes of Taraji P. Henson in *Empire*.

put together won't dazzle you half as much as five minutes of *Empire*. Taraji P. Henson alone would be enough, but then there's her wardrobe! Plus production numbers (dancers on hoverboards! Singers in gold-spiked hot pants!). Major plot twists eight times an hour! And heartfelt speeches (prison is hard on women! Human

sexuality is fluid! Black lives matter!). The spit isn't even the climax of this episode: a pregnant woman gets pushed down the stairs! A man storms in with a gun! Lucious and his son become rival nominees! Every week it's like this — I collapse on the sofa so spent that I want a cigarette. And I don't smoke.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

HOUSE OF CARDS

Frank Underwood is just getting started

Frank Underwood is coming back to Netflix — and he's "only getting started."

That was the message Underwood — the U.S. president character played by Kevin Spacey in popular show *House of Cards* — delivered in a faux campaign commercial broadcast during the GOP presidential debate Tuesday night.

"It's a new day in America," the 30-second commercial begins, over images of farms, a city skyline, jets taking off and children running with American flags. "Today, more people will go to work, return home to their families, and sleep more soundly than ever before. All because one man refuses to settle, putting people before politics. That man is Frank Underwood."

The show's fourth season of 13 episodes will premiere on Netflix on March 4. Spacey shared the commercial on Twitter with the



House of Cards returns for Season 4 in March.

CONTRIBUTED

message, "If you dont (sic) like how the table is set, turn it over. Welcome to my campaign."

The actor also linked to Underwood's campaign website, fu2016.com.

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 10:30 am Choral Holy Communion

Thursday, December 24,
 Christmas Eve
 4:00 pm Children & Families'
 Christmas Pageant. *All are welcome
 to join this service (no preparation
 required).*

10:30 pm Seasonal Music with
 String Quartet
 11:00 pm Midnight Mass with
 candles and special music

Friday, December 25,
 Christmas Day
 10:30 am Choral Holy Communion

Wednesday, January 6,
 The Feast of the Epiphany
 7:00 pm Choral Holy Communion

Sunday, January 10,
 1st Sunday after Epiphany
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Christmas Day
 7:30 am Mass • 10:30 am Mass • No 5:00 pm Mass

New Year's Eve
 12:15 pm Daily Mass
 4:00 pm Anticipated Mass of Mary, Mother of God

**New Year's Day
 Feast of Mary, Mother of God**
 10:00 am Mass (*note change of time*)
 11:00 am Archbishop's Levee in the
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 5:00 pm Mass

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GOSSIP BRIEFS

Lupita Nyong'o's clueless Star Wars audition

Hollywood can keep you busy, especially after you've won an Oscar for your film debut.

That might explain why Lupita Nyong'o didn't quite connect the dots when she had a meeting with J.J. Abrams a couple of years ago.

"I didn't really know what

I was auditioning for," said Nyong'o, who plays the alien Maz Kanata in The Force Awakens, the latest Star Wars film. "I guess I thought I should find work,



you know? I was so busy, I was working with adrenaline, so I went in and out. I barely remember that audition, and then two months later (Abrams) called me."

So what did this mystery audition entail, exactly?

"I remember crouching around and using my hands as a gun." Sounds... fun?

NED EHRBAR/
METRO HOLLYWOOD

Lamar Odom is 'not doing great'

Not to bum you out too much so close to the holidays, but here's an update on convalescing brothel-patronizing Lamar Odom.

"He's not doing great," a source tells Entertainment Tonight. "His speech is still slurred and he can barely walk on his own yet. He forgets a lot of people's names — sometimes even his own. He definitely has some

memory loss."

Those close to the former NBA star are still hoping for him to be "mentally fully recovered" in a year and a half's time, but the progress is frustratingly slow. Khloe Kardashian, for her part, posted a video to her

website recently expressing her hopes for the future.

"Lord knows I've had stress and anxiety lately," she said. "This year has been absolutely horrible, but it's almost done. I'm just praying that 2016 will be better. It has to be."

NED EHRBAR/METRO
HOLLYWOOD



THE VOICE

Road getting rocky for Blake and Gwen

I'm sure it's just a total, complete coincidence that just after the latest season of The Voice ends, we get our first report of trouble in the romance between co-coaches Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton.

Not suspicious at all, this.

So the duo, both recently divorced and involved in a "romance" that's been played up for the cameras during the most recent season of The Voice, are said to be hitting a rough patch after a backstage incident in which Shelton left his phone behind in the makeup room and Stefani witnessed a text message come in from his ex-wife, Miranda Lambert, according to In Touch.

"Gwen saw it and lost it. She found Blake and asked to speak to him privately, but he said he couldn't right then and there. She had tears

running down her face and went and locked herself in her dressing room," a source says.

"Gwen has seen texts between Blake and Miranda. She's really a mess over this."

Is she, though?

Or is this all part of the predetermined plan? When did I become so cynical?

NED EHRBAR/METRO HOLLYWOOD



The Weeknd in hot water with Bella Hadid

PARTY SCENE

The Canadian was reportedly spotted getting cozy with fans

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood



When will people learn that parties are not the best places to misbehave? You know, because other people can see you?

Singer The Weeknd apparently didn't realize this when he decided to get with a pair of eager young fans at a private party celebrating the release of his new album — a party from which 19-year-old model girlfriend (as in she's a model and his girlfriend, not a model girlfriend.) Bella Hadid was conspicuously absent.

"He went to an after-party at a private house in L.A.," a source tells Life & Style, where he hit it off with a blonde and



The Weeknd's girlfriend, model Bella Hadid, was not present at a steamy L.A. party. GETTY IMAGES

a brunette.

"He was making out with both of them, going back and forth. Then they disappeared

into a bedroom together."

But it's totally cool, I'm sure he just wanted to explain to them in private how much he

loves his girlfriend.

Now, maybe I'm a little out of touch, but what's a Weeknd?

OH WHAT FUN IT IS
TO BE DONE.

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SHOPPERS
DRUG MART



These gifts are keepers

Today is National Regifting Day. Want to give something special that won't be passed from friend to friend? Here's a roundup of stylish gifts that promise to stay near and dear to the recipient.

Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada



1 Decorative Red Cross Hot-Water Bottle

It's hot and looks great in a tight turtleneck — a keeper for sure! \$15, Simons.ca

2 Philips Sonicare DiamondClean, Black

Add high design and technology to his or her bathroom. The cup is also the charger, and the set includes a travel pack charger that plugs into the laptop. \$229, Walmart.ca

3 Hudson's Bay Company Multi-Stripe Flannel Sheet Set

Classic stripe and the cosiness of high-quality flannel makes the perfect personal (or selfish) gift. From \$149, TheBay.com

4 VertuoLine Evoluo Cherry Red

Get your java style on with the touch of a button. This machine makes a quality cup of coffee or a true Euro-style espresso — you decide for yourself. \$249, Nespresso.com

5 Cire Trudon's Nazareth Candle

The finest candle in the world will help keep the memories of Christmas alive well after the holidays. \$125, Avenue-Road.com

6 15x Magnifying LED Lighted Mirror with Suction Cups

Once you see your beauty magnified like this you'll never glance in a regular mirror again. \$27, Bed-BathAndBeyond.ca

Weeknights at 6 Hannah counts down the HOTTEST songs of the day.

TOP SIX@6 LAST NIGHT:

- 6 One Direction Perfect
- 5 Fetty Wap ft Remmy Boyz 679
- 4 Justin Bieber Sorry
- 3 Adele Hello
- 2 Shawn Mendes ft Camila Cabello I Know What You Did Last Summer
- 1 Classified ft Snoop Dogg No Pressure

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5	1	4	6	9	7	3	2	8
7	2	3	4	1	8	6	5	9
8	9	6	2	3	5	1	4	7
4	3	7	1	5	9	8	6	2
2	6	5	7	8	4	9	1	3
1	8	9	3	6	2	5	7	4
9	4	1	5	7	3	2	8	6
3	5	2	8	4	6	7	9	1
6	7	8	9	2	1	4	3	5

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games

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metronews.ca/panel

Get the most at the last minute



Last-minute holiday shopping can be overwhelming, so experts say it's important to remain thoughtful and find those rare times when malls aren't too crowded. ISTOCK

SHOPPING

It's not too late to find great Christmas gifts

Astrid Van Den Broek

Of course. You waited too long to snag that Dr. Who Tardis adult onesie and now they're all sold out. Now what are you going to get your sister? And when are you going to tackle the rest of your Christmas shopping?

Not to worry — we asked these top shopping bloggers for their best tips on approaching the last-minute Christmas shop.

Stay cool

"Christmas shopping can get overwhelming, especially if you've left it late, so take a minute first to really think of creative or thoughtful gifts to give your loved ones," says Tiffany Anthonia, the blogger behind shopaholicoverhere.blogspot.com.

Plan your shopping

Write down your list of who to shop for and check it twice. "And try to shop at stores that have a variety of product categories to save time when you have an entire list to shop for," adds Anthonia. If you can, also opt for low-traffic shopping times — think during the week as soon as the mall or stores open rather than wading into after-work, rush-hour shopping.

Set your limits

"I'm a fan of the 'do it all at once' approach," says Anne Keery, the blogger behind UniqueGifter.com. "But if this is a source of stress, give yourself reasonable constraints, like 'Everything needs to come from this mall in the next three hours.' Setting boundaries for yourself can make things a lot less worrisome."

Make alternative arrangements

Your "it" item is out of stock online? "If the retailer has a brick and mortar location, see if the item is available in-store because most major retailers like Best Buy, Toys "R" Us and Wal-

66

Don't grab the first thing you see just because you're on a time crunch.

Tiffany Anthonia
Shopping Blogger

mart offer free in-store pickup. This way you can buy the item online, then get an email within an hour or two when it's ready to be picked up in-store," says Kyle James, founder of rather-be-shopping.com.

Get creative

Or try posting a "Wanted" ad for your must-have item on classified sites such as Craigslist and Kijiji, and also check eBay.

"Alternatively, give a card with the name of the gift and a future delivery date," says Keery.

Or use that gift idea as inspiration. "At least you know what gift direction you wanted to go, so find a gift that's either similar or complementary of that gift you had in mind," says Anthonia. "You might come across an even better gift."

INTRODUCING
HOLIDAY 2015

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Give the gift of giving to others

Ylva Van Buuren

Could there be anything more satisfying than finding the perfect gift for those you love? Absolutely! Knowing that the gifts are doing good for others, too. Here are some gift ideas that keep on giving.

Agriculture Pack
A World Vision Agriculture Pack provides seeds, animal feed, tools, training and emergency food to families in need. It costs \$35, but partnerships with the Canadian government and various companies and agencies double the value to \$70. Visit worldvision.ca/gifts.

Charity Gift Cards
When you wrap up a CanadaHelps gift card, the recipient gets to choose which charity to support. There are more than 86,000 registered charities with CanadaHelps ranging from local health and arts and culture to environmental and social services charities. Gift cards start at \$5. Visit canadahelps.org.

Help Syrian Refugees
There are many ways to help a Syrian family coming to Canada. Check in your community to see if a family is being sponsored, make a donation or volunteer your time or services. There is also the Syria Emergency Relief Fund. Visit charityintelligence.ca/syrian-refugees.

TOMS Slippers
Women's White Gold Boucle Slippers are a perfect holiday gift. Plus, for every pair of TOMS shoes you buy, the company provides a new pair of shoes to children in need. To date, the company has given more than 45 million new pairs of shoes to children around the world. \$55/pair. Visit toms.ca or select retailers across Canada.

Shop for Hope

From the exclusive Shop for Hope collection at Winners and HomeSense, the net proceeds from the sale of the Plush Owl go to the Canadian

Women's Foundation. \$14.99/each. Available at Winners, winners.ca and HomeSense, homesense.ca.

Gift with a Gift

Choose a gift at Indigo such as the Fair Isle Socks with Faux-Sherpa Lining, and keep the gift going by donating to the Indigo Love of Reading Foundation at the cashier. The charity puts books into the hands of high-needs elementary

school children. \$34.50/pair. Visit chapters.indigo.ca.

Help Free the Children

All artisans gifts purchased from Me to We help Free the Children communities overseas. A Ghanaian Brass Halo Necklace, for example, gives a woman access to a prenatal workshop. A Rafiki, made with colourful glass beads threaded onto a stretchy 48-inch cord and worn as a bracelet, necklace, etc., helps educate a child for one year. Necklace, \$32, Rafiki, \$10. Visit shop.metowe.com.

Angels for Angels
Goods sold by Ten Thousand Villages are made by artisans in marginalized communities around the world, and every purchase helps those communities. At the same time, \$2 from every purchase of the handcrafted Capiz Angel ornament from the Philippines will help fund Breakfast for Learning, the first national charity focused on nourishing Canadian children.

Orna - ment, \$20. Visit tenthousandvillages.ca or select retailers across Canada.

Help At-Risk Youth

Until Dec. 31, \$5 from the sale of every Samsung Galaxy Grand Prime purchased from Virgin Mobile will go towards the company's RE*Generation program that

helps connect at-risk and homeless youth with training, skills and opportunities for employment.

The slim-line phone with 1.2 GHz Quad Core processor, long-lasting battery and 5 MP camera is \$249 (price varies depending on the plan).

Purchase it at Virgin Mobile retail and virginmobile.ca. Virgin Mobile members can also participate by adding 'Change for a Dollar' to their monthly phone bill to donate \$1/month to the cause. Members and Canadians can also text the word REGEN to 30333 to donate \$5 to the RE*Generation program.

LA-RS Bracelets
Modeled after the Cartier love bracelets, these ONEXONE bracelets benefit the onex-one.org charity and help feed children a healthy meal. Each set comes with four colours to represent various human races.

Join celebrities Chandler Parsons, Rita Ora, Diplo, Marcus Stroman, Hailey Baldwin and others... and try them on for size. \$30. Visit la-rs.org.

Help WWF
Adopt a Spirit Bear for \$40 and help the World Wide Fund for Nature protect the species. You'll receive a kit containing a plush bear, adoption certificate, poster and reusable WWF tote bag.

There are more than 30 different species to choose from. Visit shop.wwf.ca.



Commit to Local for the Holidays

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1



4



5



2



3



6

- 1 World Vision Agriculture Pack, \$35
- 2 Ten Thousand Villages Capiz Angel ornament, \$20
- 3 TOMS White Gold Boucle Slippers, \$55
- 4 Indigo Fair Isle Socks, \$34.50
- 5 Me to We Rafiki, \$10
- 6 World Wide Fund for Nature Spirit Bear, \$40

Light up the eyes of gamers

Marc Saltzman

'Tis the season to be jolly, and what better way to keep the kids — and kids at heart — happy than with a brand new video game.

If it's console and computer gamers you're shopping for, the following are some thumb-numbing suggestions. Prices are generally \$49.99 to \$74.99, depending on the platform. Be sure to check the ESRB age-rating in the corner of the box before buying.

Kids

Most games let you play content created by other people, but Nintendo's Super Mario Maker (for Nintendo Wii U) also lets you design, create and share your very own Super Mario adventures. Along with the 60-odd playable Nintendo-made levels, the game includes tools to make two-dimensional platforming levels based on previous Super Mario games.

As you might suspect, you'll mostly run from the left side of the screen to the right, leap across platforms, break open



Nintendo's Yoshi's Woolly World

power-ups, climb into pipes, and jump on enemies to destroy them. After you've designed a world, play it through, hand the controller to a sibling or friend, or upload to the online community. You can download other creations, too.

One of the world's hottest kids' franchises is getting a reboot. Activision's Skylanders SuperChargers (for multiple platforms) once again fuses action figures with a video game — the toys come alive on the television screen when placed on the Portal of Power, which is connected to the console — but now there's collectible vehicles added to the mix. Players can tackle missions by land, sea and air, in a number of customizable and upgradeable vehicles, including cars, motorcycles, boats, tanks, helicopters



Star Wars Battlefront

and submarines. The game also introduces 20 new Skylanders characters, but parents will be relieved to learn the game also supports all existing Skylanders characters.

Other kids' games that won't disappoint: Nintendo's Yoshi's Woolly World, Disney's Disney Infinity 3.0, WB Games' LEGO: Dimensions, and Sony's Tearaway Unfolded.

Teens

Launching just ahead of the film Star Wars: Episode VII — The Force Awakens, Star Wars Battlefront from DICE and Electronic Arts (PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows PC) drops players into intense intergalactic battles based in iconic Star Wars locations — such as the snowy planet of Hoth — pitting Rebel forces against

the Empire.

Along with playing as characters based on the original movie trilogy, you'll pilot beloved vehicles, as well, ranging from AT-ATs and TIE fighters to speeder bikes and even the Millennium Falcon. The game includes many online multiplayer modes and mission types for dozens of simultaneous players.

Guitar Hero is back after a five-year hiatus and it's nothing short of ambitious. Along with single-player and local multiplayer options, Activision's Guitar Hero Live (for multiple platforms) introduces a mode called GHTV, an always-on 24-hour music video network that lets you log on, strap in and strum to a continually updated collection of music videos and concert footage. That is — instead of the cartoon-like



Bethesda Softworks' Fallout 4

animated bands from previous games — you can rock out to your favorite artists and discover new music, while challenging others for high score.

Other recommended games for teens: Sony's Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection, EA Sports' NHL 16, and Activision's Destiny: The Taken King.

Adults

One of the most buzzed about games of the year, Bethesda Softworks' Fallout 4 (Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Windows PC), is the long-awaited return to the beloved single-player, open-world, role-playing game series. The follow-up to 2008's Fallout 3 lets you choose to play as a male or female and select a specific set of skills, and then venture out of a vault 200 years after an

apocalyptic event. Played from a first- or third-person perspective, you can freely roam around huge environments, interface with memorable characters and gain access to more than 50 base weapons and more than 700 modifications. Plus, gamers can take advantage of a deep crafting system to create unique adventures.

The next installment of the legendary sci-fi shooter franchise, Halo 5: Guardians, is the built to showcase the power of Xbox One. Complementing its intense storyline — which can be run with three friends in a cooperative (co-op) mode — this new game focuses heavily on competitive multiplayer. One mode called Warzone challenges up to 24 players to battle on the biggest maps in Halo to date, while taking on multiple objectives including big boss battles, with land and air craft to aid in the fight.

Other worthy games for adults: Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed: Syndicate, CD Projekt Red's The Witcher 3: Witch Hunt, Activision's Call of Duty: Black Ops III, Microsoft Studios/Crystal Dynamics' Rise of the Tomb Raider, and Konami's Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain.

Consoles that make the gift list



1

Mike Yawney

It doesn't matter how young or old you are; video games continue to be a dominant pastime.

While no new gaming consoles launched this year, some unique limited edition bundles did surface. Here are the top picks for those looking to surprise a gamer on their gift list.



2

Xbox One Limited Edition Halo 5: Guardians Console - \$549.00

There is no denying the Halo franchise is a force to be reckoned with, so it comes as no surprise Microsoft is releasing this limited edition Xbox One console for the holidays.

The design of the console itself is inspired by Spartan technology and has a massive 1 TB hard drive to store your games and media. The wireless controller also sees a redesign with a new 3.5-mm headset jack. Other bonus items include a Spartan-themed SteelBook case with Halo 5: Guardians Limited Edition full game download, a Guardian model and exclusive downloadable content.

Star Wars Battlefront PlayStation 4 Console - \$469.99

The ultimate PlayStation bundle for any Star Wars fan, this unique console bears the image of Darth Vader's mask, while the DualShock wireless controller is designed after his chest panel. Not only does this come with the highly anticipated Star Wars Battlefront game, it also includes four additional classic Star Wars games to keep even the best gamers busy over the holidays.

New Nintendo 3DS XL - \$229.99

Nintendo's latest handheld console features not only a larger screen for more immersive gameplay, but new technology. Super stable 3D allows for a better experience and wider range of viewing angles. The handheld device also features built-in NFC functionality for communication with Nintendo's new Amiibo figures.

- 1 Xbox One Limited Edition Halo 5: Guardians Console, \$549.00
- 2 New Nintendo 3DS XL, \$229.99
- 3 Star Wars Battlefront PlayStation 4 Console, \$469.99

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MOOSEHEADS Trade talk runs rampant



Kristen Lipscombe
Metro | Halifax

Is it Timo's time ... to be traded? That question, along with which other Halifax Mooseheads might be in consideration for mid-season deals with other Quebec Major Junior Hockey League teams, is now up for debate by local hockey fans.

Speculation on the upcoming trade period, which officially starts this weekend and ends early in the new year, is running rampant on popular forums such as Moose Talk and Hockey's Future.

Many fans on popular chat site Moose Talk, under the QM-JHL Maritimes Division of ProBoards.com, suggest that general manager Cam Russell might be willing to let go of captain Meier, as well as other top Herd veterans, in an attempt to snag some young up-and-comers and high draft picks, since this seems to be a rebuilding year for the Halifax franchise, while other teams are hoping to gain top talent for their playoff runs.

Only time will tell whether Meier, who is currently with the Swiss national under-20 team in preparation for the upcoming world juniors in Finland, will be back in a Mooseheads jersey.

Russell could not be reached for comment Wednesday night.

In the meantime, the Mooseheads are back on Scotiabank Centre ice Thursday night to host the Moncton Wildcats, with puck drop at 7 p.m. They then hit the road to face off against the Saint John Sea Dogs at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, their final game before Christmas.



Mooseheads forward, and San Jose Sharks prospect, Timo Meier. GETTY IMAGES

Pens draw blanks vs. B's

NHL

Sullivan 0-for-2 with star-laden Pittsburgh team

Tuukka Rask stopped 34 shots for his fourth shutout, Jimmy Hayes ended a 15-game goal-scoring drought and the Boston Bruins beat Pittsburgh 3-0 Wednesday night, keeping new Penguins coach Mike Sullivan winless after his first two games.

Max Talbot and Ryan Spooner also scored to help the Bruins improve to 5-0-1 in their last six meetings with the Penguins. Boston is also 9-1-3 in its last 13 games overall.

WEDNESDAY In Boston

3	0
PENGUINS	BRUINS

Rask got his 30th career shutout and is 7-0-2 in his last nine starts.

Pittsburgh backup goalie Jeff Zatkoff had 26 saves as the Penguins lost for the seventh time in nine games (2-4-3). Top goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, who started 25 of the first 29, is expected to miss up to two weeks with a concussion.

Sullivan replaced fired coach Mike Johnston on Saturday, and Pittsburgh lost 4-1 to Washington in his debut Monday.

Struggling through a season that had them in 11th in the



The Bruins' Jimmy Hayes checks the Penguins' Brian Dumoulin into the boards in Boston, Wednesday.

WINSLOW TOWNSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eastern Conference coming in, the Penguins were looking for a spark after they fired Johnston on Saturday.

The lack of goal scoring that's plagued them for most of this season continued. Star centre Sidney Crosby has just six goals in the team's 30 games.

The Bruins grabbed a 1-0 lead when Talbot slipped a wrist by Zatkoff's glove and inside the right post midway into the opening period.

Boston made it 2-0 on Hayes' score four minutes into the second. Hayes was charging hard to the net with Penguins

defenceman Ian Cole. Spooner's pass toward the net hit Cole's skate, popped into the air and deflected into the net. Sullivan challenged that there was goaltender interference.

Spooner added an empty-net, power-play goal with 2:43 to play.

Penguins winger Chris Kunitz hit a post late in the second when they outshot Boston 18-4 in the period — after getting outshot 10-6 in the first.

Pittsburgh entered the game averaging just 2.31 goals per game, which was 27th in the league. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Goalies willing to shrink for greater good

Like many of his counterparts, New Jersey Devils goalie Cory Schneider had an easy choice when presented with the option of larger nets or smaller equipment in the NHL's latest bid to boost goal-scoring.

Don't mess with the nets. "Absolutely. I think we have to explore every avenue we can to maybe change the gear before we change the nets," Schneider said. "It would be like changing the size of the pucks."

Reducing the rubber isn't going to happen, but it appears the era of Michelin Man-like goalies

It doesn't matter. Goalies are going to be good, no matter what.
Predators netminder Pekka Rinne

— outfitted with bulging chest and shoulder pads, and wearing pants 14 sizes too big — might be drawing to a close.

The NHL and the NHL Players Association are in discussions to standardize goalie gear based on a player's size. The proposed rules would regulate pants, all upper-body pads and potentially introduce a more form-fitting jersey.

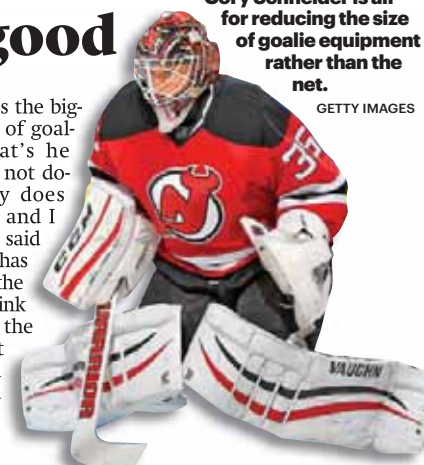
Goalies would have their equipment approved by the NHL, rather than dealing directly with manufacturers as they do now.

This would be the next step in a process that began in 2013-14, when the league started regulating the length of goalie leg pads.

The objectives are to increase scoring, place more emphasis on a goalie's skill and establish a more even playing field.

"I think that's the biggest insecurity of goal-tending: 'What's he doing that I'm not doing?' or, 'Why does he look so big and I look so small?'" said Schneider, who has played a role in the discussions. "I think it's natural that the gear should fit your body, and not you should fit the gear."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Cory Schneider is all for reducing the size of goalie equipment rather than the net.

GETTY IMAGES

FIFA

Platini shoots down ethics committee

Fighting for their careers in soccer politics, Michel Platini plans to boycott his hearing at the FIFA ethics court on Friday while Sepp Blatter is expected to attend his on Thursday.

Platini is protesting the hearing because he believes his case has been pre-judged, his lawyers said Wednesday in a statement.

Although FIFA investigators have asked for a life ban, Platini could escape with a ban of several years — a result that would still effectively exile him and end his FIFA presidential ambitions.

“By this decision Michel Platini means to express his deepest indignation with a process he regards as solely political and intended to prevent him from standing for the FIFA presidency,” the former France great’s lawyers said.

Less than 90 minutes earlier, FIFA ethics committee judges

had promised Platini a fair trial even if he carried out the threat to snub the hearing.

The case centres on Platini getting about \$2 million from FIFA in 2011 as uncontracted salary for his time working as a presidential adviser to Blatter from 1999-2002.

The agreement was “a classic conflict of interest” between two FIFA executive committee members, FIFA audit panel chairman Domenico Scala told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

“

I want to defend myself.

Sepp Blatter says he indeed will show up for his hearing Thursday.

MLB

7-player swap sends Frazier to Chicago

The White Sox were looking to add some pop while solidifying third base, and they are counting on Todd Frazier to provide it.

The all-star third baseman was acquired from the Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday as part of a three-team, seven-player trade that also included the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Los Angeles received second baseman Micah Johnson, right-hander Frankie Montas and outfielder Trayce Thompson from the White Sox, and Cincinnati got infielders Brandon Dixon and Jose Peraza and outfielder Scott Schebler from the Dodgers.

The 29-year-old Frazier, who won last summer’s all-star Home Run Derby in Cincinnati, was an NL All-Star in each of the last



Todd Frazier
GETTY IMAGES

two seasons and hit .255 this year with 43 doubles, 35 homers and 89 RBIs.

“I’m pretty excited,” he said. “I’ve got to be truthful with you. I know it’s the American League. I know it’s gonna be a little different. It might take a little time to get acclimated. But I just saw the lineup on TV. It kinda put a smile on my face to see the guys we’ve got.”

The move gives the White Sox a run producer and solid defensive third baseman who grew into a clubhouse leader in Cincinnati.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



BASEBALL IN BRIEF

\$7M will bring Napoli to Ohio, source says

A person familiar with the deal says the Cleveland Indians have an agreement with free agent first baseman Mike Napoli on a \$7 million, one-year contract.

Napoli’s deal includes \$3 million in performance bonuses, the person told the Associated Press on Wednesday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Napoli must pass a physical.

Last season, Napoli hit .224 with 18 home runs and 50 RBIs with Boston and Texas. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

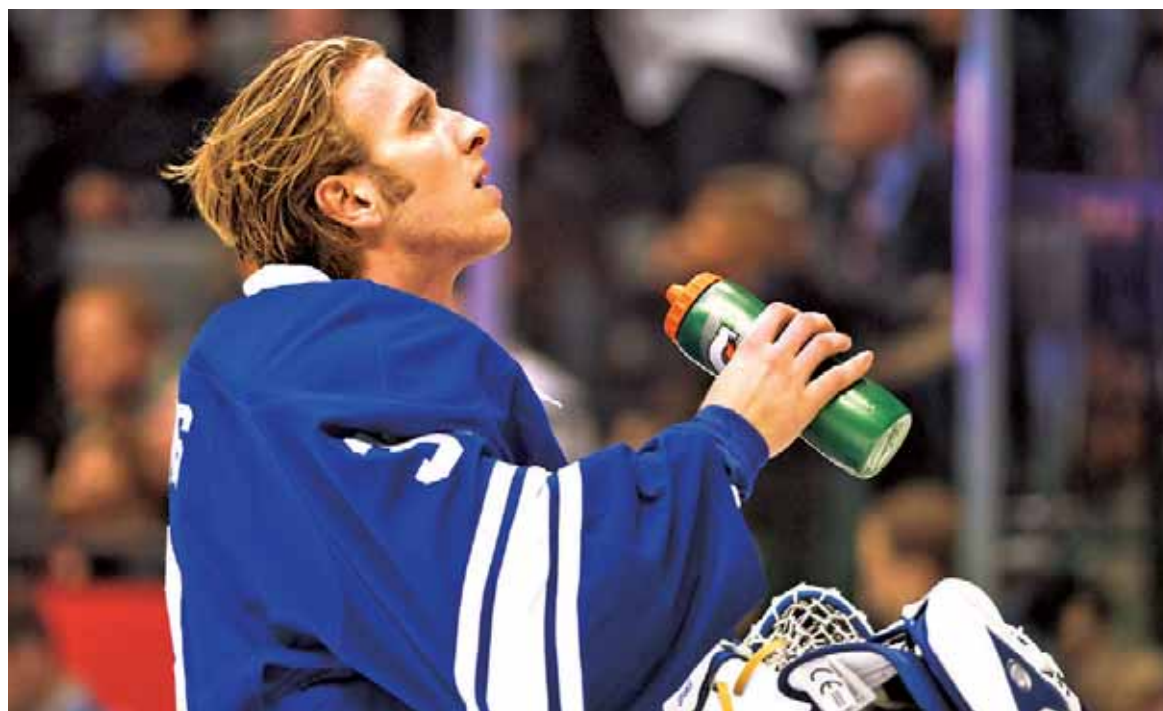
Catcher Molina’s thumb on mend after surgery No. 2

St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina has undergone a second operation on his injured left thumb and will be in a cast for up to five weeks.

Molina had the surgery because he was still experiencing discomfort in the thumb he had initially had an operation on in mid-October after the Cardinals were eliminated in the NL Division Series.

The team is hopeful the eight-time Gold Glove winner and seven-time All-Star can return by opening day.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Garret Sparks will start when the Leafs host San Jose on Thursday night. DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

No benefit of the doubt for Bernier

NHL

Babcock turns to Sparks after former No. 1’s latest flop

Garret Sparks is back in net for the Toronto Maple Leafs for a simple reason: He wins.

Sparks will start for the Maple Leafs on Thursday night when Toronto hosts the San Jose Sharks with struggling Jonathan Bernier back on the bench.

“He’s 3-1 and this is the National Hockey League and he’s done a good job and we’ve been

able to get points when he’s in the net,” said Maple Leafs head coach Mike Babcock after Toronto finished practice on Wednesday afternoon. “That’s what it’s about. We’re in the winning business so we’re going to give him the opportunity to go next game.”

Sparks has a 3-1-0 record for the Maple Leafs with a 2.20 goals-against average and a .921 save percentage after being called up from the AHL’s Toronto Marlies on Nov. 30.

“

I just have to battle every day, have some fun ... the rest will come.

Jonathan Bernier

Bernier is 0-8-2 with a 3.45 GAA and an .881 save percentage for the Maple Leafs this season. He did a 10-day conditioning stint with the Marlies last

week, earning shutouts in his first three games but then lost to the Utica Comets 5-4 in overtime on Sunday, giving up a goal on the first shot.

He returned to the Leafs’ on Tuesday and again struggled in a 5-4 overtime loss to the visiting Tampa Bay Lightning.

+ INJURY UPDATE

James Reimer had claimed the No. 1 after going 7-4-4 with a 2.01 GAA and a .935 save percentage but has not played since Dec. 3 due to groin problems.

Babcock was succinct when asked for an evaluation of Bernier’s performance against Tampa Bay.

“I just think that the puck’s going in, so Sparks will start,” Babcock said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

No longer young, but Joe still loved in S.J.

Joe Thornton no longer wears the “C” on his chest and can’t pile up the points like he used to. That hasn’t stopped him from loving hockey.

Thornton is 36, and his contract expires after the 2016-17 season. Even if he insists he’s not looking beyond next season, the San Jose Sharks centre hasn’t lost sight of why he plays the game.

“I just really, really enjoy coming to the rink every day,” Thornton said Wednesday. “I have a smile on my face. I’ve got the best job in the world.”

It’s a job that will land Thornton in the Hockey Hall of Fame after he decides to retire.

When he suits up Thursday night in Toronto, it’ll be Thornton’s 1,316th NHL game.

“Jumbo is amazing,” Sharks teammate Tomas Hertl said. “He’ll be for sure in the hall of fame. I think, ‘Thank You Joe,’ because I

Joe Thornton
GETTY IMAGES

1,276

Thornton’s 1,276 points are second among active players to 43-year-old Jaromir Jagr’s 1,823.



started with him and he helped me with everything because first season I played with him and I scored very many goals and he helped for sure my

career and I appreciate it.”

Thornton only has four goals and 13 assists this season, but he’s not discouraged.

He’s so caught up in his day-to-day job with the Sharks that he hasn’t had time to reflect back on what he has accomplished.

If at this point he’s a bit underappreciated, DeBoer isn’t worried about it Thornton’s legacy.

“I think guys like that get their recognition maybe a little bit later, but he’ll get his,” DeBoer said. “There’s no doubt.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SKIING IN BRIEF

Hudec's knee problem rules him out for season

Jan Hudec's ski racing season is over before it began. The Olympic bronze medalist in super-G in 2014 needs to treat and rehabilitate his problematic right knee.



Jan Hudec
GETTY IMAGES

Hudec had surgery in January on a torn meniscus that sidelined him last season. He returned to the Canada's alpine ski team for this season, but the Californian, 34 had a setback in November. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ontarian Yurkiw fastest in World Cup training run

Larisa Yurkiw of Owen Sound, Ont., was the quickest in training Wednesday for a World Cup downhill race in Val d'Isere, France.

Yurkiw posted a time of one minute, 47.79 seconds, with Nicole Schmidhofer of Austria .10 behind and Lindsey Vonn of the U.S. trailing by .21. Another downhill training is scheduled for Thursday followed by a race on Friday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

McGregor warned from above

UFC

Lightweight stars say champ shouldn't move up in weight

UFC featherweight champion Conor McGregor has vowed to move up in weight soon to fight for the lightweight title. The two men he could face for that belt are both warning him to pick on somebody his own size.

UFC lightweight champion Rafael Dos Anjos faces Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone on Saturday night in a title fight in Orlando. UFC President Dana White says the winner's next bout will be against McGregor if the popular Irish champion decides to move up from 145 to 155 pounds.

Dos Anjos and Cerrone dislike each other, but they agree McGregor's fists wouldn't pack quite so much punch in the larger weight class. "He gets a lot of hype, and he's a good fighter," Dos Anjos said. "But if he comes to the lightweight division, he's going to get hurt." McGregor ended featherweight champion Jose Aldo's 10-year, 18-fight winning



He gets a lot of hype, and he's a good fighter. But if he comes to the lightweight division, he's going to get hurt.

Rafael Dos Anjos

streak last Saturday with a stunning knockout just 13 seconds into their title fight at UFC 194 in Las Vegas. Afterwards, McGregor repeated his intention to become a simultaneous two-belt champion, although he isn't sure when he will try it.

"He's too small to come to 155," Cerrone said. "His jaw is powerful. He's got good talk. But he won't fare (well) with the top (lightweight fighters)."

McGregor's celebrity has grown past every UFC fighter except Ronda Rousey, largely



Featherweight champ Conor McGregor STEVE MARCUS/GETTY IMAGES

because he has recorded devastating stoppage victories in five straight fights and six of his seven UFC bouts. His vicious striking power has backed up his bold public pronouncements about taking over both divisions.

"I'm looking to replicate what I've achieved in a previous (promotion): a two-weight world champion held consecutively," McGregor said moments after beating Aldo. "I said I would do it, and I will do it."

Cerrone understands why McGregor is entertaining the pros-

pect of a lightweight title run. McGregor acknowledges that his weight cut to 145 pounds is gruelling, and his coach would prefer that McGregor no longer attempt such dramatic weight loss in the days before his fights.

Cerrone just doesn't think McGregor's power will work as well on bigger opponents, even if his gift of gab stays strong.

"He's a salesman. But if he wants to sell the fight, I don't have a problem with that. If he wants to pump up the fight, I'll slap him around and call him a



He's too small to come to 155. His jaw is powerful. He's got good talk. But he won't fare (well) with the top (fighters).

Donald Cerrone

schoolgirl," Cerrone said.

Although Cerrone thinks it's a bad idea for McGregor, he would welcome the payday that will come to the opponent lucky enough to be matched with McGregor's pay-per-view drawing power. The Brazilian laboured in the UFC for 18 bouts before finally beating Anthony Pettis to claim the 155-pound title. "It took so many fights for me to get my title shot, but if the UFC thinks I should fight him, I'm going to do it," said Dos Anjos.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE French Onion Soup



PHOTO: MAMA VISENTE

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

You won't believe you made your favourite pub food and, better yet, you decide how high to croutons get piled.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Serves 4

- Ingredients**
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
 - 1 clove of garlic, minced
 - 2 Tbsp butter
 - 2 tsp sugar
 - 1 Tbsp fresh thyme
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 1 Tbsp flour
 - 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
 - 4 cups beef stock
 - Half a stick of baguette
 - 1 cup grated Gruyère and Parmesan mixed

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven, melt butter and toss onion slices, garlic, sugar, thyme and pinch of salt and pepper. Cook over medium low heat for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring frequently, until onions soften.
2. Sprinkle the flour over the onion mixture and stir. Add the vinegar and a cup of stock. Stir well, scraping the bottom of the pot to deglaze. Add the rest of the stock and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Turn your oven onto broil. Cut bread into 1-inch thick slices. Cut as many slices as bowls of soup you'll be serving. Lay them on a cookie sheet and now put a layer of the cheese mix on each piece. Broil in the oven until cheese melts and bread is golden brown.
4. Remove bread from oven and cut into pieces. Ladle the soup into bowls and top with a slice of bread's worth of croutons.

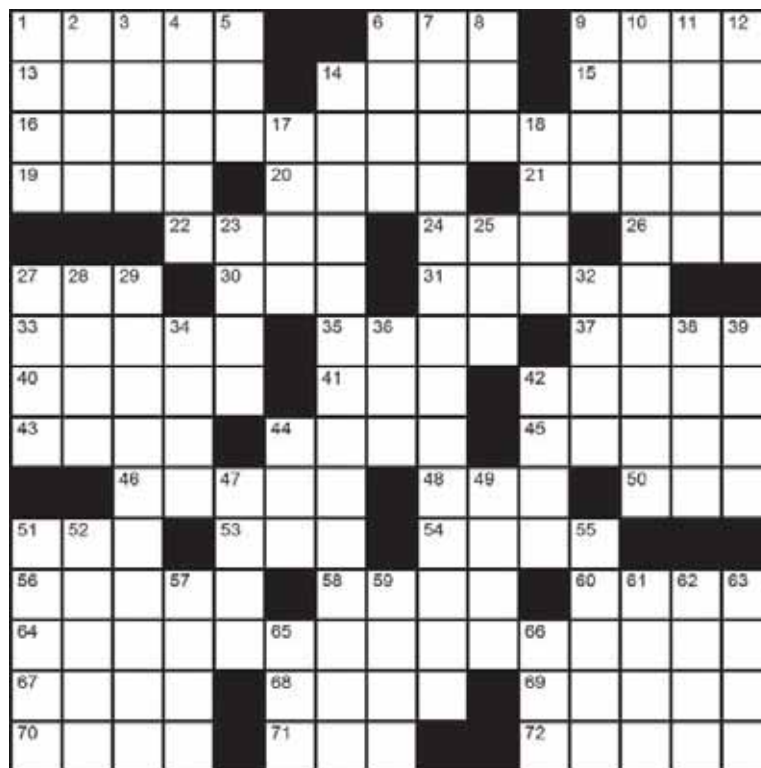
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CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

ACROSS

1. Kate __ (Designer brand)
6. In past times
9. '___' Edmonton
13. 'Ripley's Believe It ___!'
14. Ocean colour, en francais
15. Thomas Augustine __: "Rule, Britannia" composer
16. Louisbourg... Does this in the 18th century on Cape Breton Island: 3 wds.
19. Buy and __, as stock
20. Jam in
21. Disconcerted
22. Concrete chunk
24. Use up
26. Tiny tallnesses
27. "20/20" network
30. __, hurry (Rushed)
31. Folklore fellow Tom
33. Writer's ache
35. Uncommon, to Caesar
37. Blunders
40. 6:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
41. Jackie O's hubby
42. Blood, __ & Tears
43. Greek portico
44. International oil gr.
45. As per #14-Down...
- "Peyton ___" (Primetime soap of the 1960s)
46. Extreme
48. Prior
50. Nature's morning coat
51. Ship-shaped table-



- ware ornament
53. Poetic preposition
 54. Towel holders
 56. "Over the Rainbow" co-composer Harold
 58. Make a scarf
 60. Nile wader
 64. Newfoundland

- pudding Figgy Duff or Quebec meat pie Tourtiere, for example: 2 wds.
67. Forum outfit
 68. Take __ the waist, as alterations: 2 wds.
 69. "Home ___" (1990)
 70. Original space

- matter
71. Grey hue
 72. Outdoes

DOWN

1. Cries
2. Sister on "Charmed"
3. Indigo
4. As per #14-

- Down... "Valley of the ___" (1967)
5. Plane's take-off info
 6. __ Romeo (Sports car)
 7. Pom-pommed winterwear item in the Hudson's Bay Company Collection,

- Wool __ Tuque
8. Their-not
 9. Wild West's Wyatt
 10. Its aroma draws customers into the bakery each day: 2 wds.
 11. Beginning
 12. Breaks
 14. Vancouver-born actress who starred on the show at #45-Across and in the movie at #4-Down: 2 wds.
 17. Skim
 18. Ballet skirt
 23. Gloss-placing spots
 25. "Gotchal"
 27. Pretends
 28. England denizen, e.g.
 29. Soldier's disguise
 32. Kitten's whimper
 34. Recipe result
 36. 'Hect' ending
 38. Sprint
 39. Brood
 42. Accelerated
 44. Portland's state, briefly
 47. Ms. Collette
 49. Oscar-winning composer Nino
 51. Dapper
 52. Mr. Flynn
 55. Sashay
 57. Cheese type
 59. Old Testament sailor
 61. Life stories, briefly
 62. Fails to be
 63. Tal Bachman's "___ So High"
 65. Ms. Carrere
 66. Sci. spot

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
In your rush to get ahead of the game you may take on too much. You sometimes have the strength to do two or even three jobs at once but if you do too much now you may regret it later on. Slow down.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If you stick your nose in other people's business you may regret it. Think how you would feel if others were to involve themselves in your private affairs without being invited.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Is family more important than work? That's the question you need to answer today. Eventually you'll find a stable balance between your home life and your more worldly ambitions.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Keep opinions to yourself. There's no point trying to persuade others to see things your way — they can't, it is beyond them. Go your own way. You don't need public support.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Keep your options open and listen to advice from people with expertise. You may not like to admit that others know best but in some areas they do and you should be big enough to acknowledge that fact.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You'll wish you were some place else today. But no matter how difficult the situation you have to face you'll conquer it before the day is over. You're tougher than you realize Virgo!

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If your energy takes a nose-dive then stop what you're doing and take a break. Each hour you push yourself beyond your limits will take at least a day to recover. Be kind to yourself.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You can't seem to shake off the feeling that something bad is going to happen. Most likely it's all in your head but steer clear of situations you can't fully control. Just in case.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Material and professional success is not the most important thing in your life. What matters most now is that you take the opportunity to improve your domestic situation. Work can wait but loved ones cannot.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may find it hard to get started today but once you do you'll amaze everyone by how quickly you get through your workload. Start early and the evening should be free for more enjoyable activities.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Resist the urge to point out other people's faults and failings. And don't cut corners or do anything underhand — or it could be your faults and failings that are made public.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
It's likely you will clash with someone in a position of authority. Stand your ground and refuse to be intimidated but also be ready to meet them halfway if they suggest a compromise.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		5	9	1				
1			3	6	5			
8		6				1		
6	4		2	8			3	
	9	8		5		2		4
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